

Gerald Smallacombe

Driving trains through Meldon over the viaduct.

As a driver was there anything special about having to go over the viaduct?

Yes, when it was windy you really knew it, when you come round, you just hit the end of the viaduct and you'd feel the wind would actually buffet the engine, yeah, you had to keep your head in and you'd lose your hat if you wasn't very careful and even coal that was on the tender, in high winds, you'd see the coal blow off the top.

The station at Meldon, was that just a halt?

It was a halt yes, trains used to stop there – there used to be a workman's train out from here 7 o'clock every morning, 7.02; it used to leave here (Okehampton), go out to take the workman out to Meldon, drop them off at that little platform and then there'd be a workman's train in five o'clock in the night, and on Saturdays there always used to be the 8.20 from Launceston always stopped and picked up all the women who used to live in the Quarry Cottages out there, pick up the women and to come into Okehampton to do their shopping and the 1.18 back to Bude Saturday dinnertime used to drop them off.

Was Meldon ever staffed?

Used to be a signal box there with one signaller, he used to be the local bookie as well, I mean there used to be about 200 men working the quarry, I think there was 215 one time, and he used to take all the bets!